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WILLIAM MACLAY,

United States Senator from Pennsylvania,

1789-1791.

BY

LEWIS R. HARLEY, PH. D.,

Professor of History in the Central High School, Philadelphia.

Read at a Meeting of the Chester County, Pa., Historical Society, February 18, 1909.

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William Maclay, United States Senator from Pennsylvania.

After the Federal Constitution had been ratified by a sufficient number of states, the different commonwealths proceeded to elect senators and representatives to the new Congress. Several interesting characters were thereby called into public life, among them being William Maclay, a native of Chester County. The subject of this sketch was but five years old, when the father led his family to the Scotch-Irish settlement in what is now Franklin County. Here young Maclay grew to manhood and became prominent in colonial affairs. He was soon attracted to the upper Susquehanna region, and figured in the pioneer settlement of Sunbury. After the close of the Revolutionary War, probably in 1786, he changed his residence to Harrisburg, and from this place, he was called to the first senate of the United States. Although the public career of William Maclay is identified with other portions of the State, Chester County claims him as a son by birth. It is, therefore, appropriate that the Historical Society should devote an evening to his achievements. This feeling led me to accept the invitation to prepare the paper which I now offer,—not as a complete biography of Senator Maclay, but merely an outline of the more important facts of his life.

In January, 1789, the Pennsylvania Assembly chose Robert Morris, of Philadelphia, and William Maclay, of Harrisburg, to represent this State in the United States Senate. As it was arranged that one-third of the body should retire every two years, it became necessary for the first Senators to draw their terms by lot. The long term of six years fell to Robert Morris, while William Maclay drew the short term of two years. Maclay grew up on the Scotch frontier of Pennsylvania, and had all the prejudices of the provincial settlers beyond the mountains. His friends have claimed for him the title of the first Democrat, for his opposition to the Federal policies antedated Jefferson's, who was still in Europe when Maclay took his seat as a senator. In the early days, the Senate was a secret body, but Maclay left a valuable contribution to political history in his "Sketches of Debate in the First Senate of the United States." This work throws much interesting light upon the deliberations of the Senate, when it was in many instances evenly divided, so that it became necessary for the Vice President to cast the deciding vote at least twenty times during the life of the first Congress.

Morris and his colleague, Maclay, form an interesting study in practical politics. They both took an active part in the debates of the Senate, and they disagreed on almost every subject. Maclay, naturally a man of strong prejudices, distrusted Morris and often gave him a thrust about his unsettled accounts. He had a strong suspicion of John Adams, the Vice President, whom he accused of monarchical tendencies, ambitious to become the American King. He wrote of Adams: "I have really often looked at him with surprise mingled with contempt when he is in the chair, and no business is before the Senate.

Instead of that sedate, easy air which I would have him possess, he will look on one side, then on the other, then down on the knees of his breeches, then dimple his visage with the most silly kind of half smile which I cannot well express in English. The Scotch-Irish have a word that fits it exactly—smudging. God forgive me for the vile thought, but I cannot help thinking of a monkey just put into breeches, when I see him betray such evident marks of self-conceit." From this brief introduction of our subject, we can at once draw the conclusion that William Maclay was no passive figure in politics. He had previously faced the dangers of border war in Pennsylvania, while as a young man, he had been inured to hardship by the surveyor's life on the frontier. Combative by nature, and trained in the school of experience, he became the natural leader of his fellow-countrymen from central Pennsylvania, in opposing the measures of the new Federal administration.

The Maclay family is traced back to the seventeenth century in Ireland, where a Charles Maclay is mentioned, who married, name of wife unknown. By this marriage, he had three sons, Owen, an officer in the army of James II, remained a bachelor, and died in France; Charles, an officer in the same army, who was killed in a duel with a French soldier in Dublin; and Henry, also an officer in the royal army, who fell in the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690. Charles Maclay, by a second wife, Jean Hamilton, had one son, John, who was the ancestor of the family in America. This John Maclay was born in 1680, and had the following children: Charles, Eleanor, and John. Charles Maclay, of the third generation, was born in 1710, in county Antrim, Ireland. On May 30, 1734, he sailed for America, and located on a farm in New Garden township, Chester County. He remained here until 1742, when he settled in Hopewell township, Lancaster County, now Lurgan township, Franklin County. In 1733, Charles Maclay married Eleanor Query, daughter of William Query, of county Antrim, Ireland. Eleanor Query was born in 1714, and died in Lurgan township, Franklin County, July 27, 1789. Her husband died in September, 1753, and both are interred at Middle Spring Church graveyard. Their children were: John, born May 10, 1734; William, the subject of this paper, born July 20, 1737; Charles, born August 8, 1739; Samuel, born January 7, 1741; and Eleanor, born September 20, 1750.

At the outbreak of the French and Indian War, William Maclay was a pupil in the classical academy of Rev. John Blair, Chester County. He decided to enter the military service, and his tutor gave him a recommendation as "a judicious young man and scholar," which secured him the appointment of ensign in the Pennsylvania Battalion. In 1758, the expedition against Fort Duquesne was planned, and Maclay enlisted a company of twenty-one men for Captain Montgomery. He was immediately promoted to lieutenant in the third battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Mercer. The Pennsylvania forces joined the British army under General Joseph Forbes at Carlisle. The colonial regiments from the South also gathered here, those from Virginia under the command of Washington. Indeed, Bancroft says, if it had not been for Washington, Forbes would never have reached the Ohio. On the difficult march, the enemy were encountered at Loyal Hanna, where a spirited battle was fought, in which Maclay distinguished himself. Before the end of November, the army reached Fort Duquesne, and the place, at the suggestion of Forbes, was called Pittsburg.

After the treaty of peace in 1763, the tide of settlement moved westward, and Pontiac organized the Indian tribes from Lake Ontario to Georgia in a great conspiracy to repel the English. Fort Pitt was severed from communication with the East, and General Amherst sent Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bouquet to the relief of this important post. William Maclay served in this expedition as lieutenant with the third Pennsylvania Battalion. On July 21, 1763, the army started from Carlisle and proceeded by way of Fort Bedford and Fort Ligonier. On August 5, at Bushy Run, near Braddock's field, the Indians made a savage attack, and the army engaged in battle for nearly two days. The strategy of Colonel Bouquet saved his troops, and he led them on to Fort Pitt, where he erected a stone redoubt, which stands to this day, bearing the inscription, "Colonel Bouquet, A. D. 1764." The next year Colonel Bouquet led an expedition into Ohio, in which William Maclay served as lieutenant in the regiment commanded by the Hon. John Penn. In this campaign, Maclay was stationed with a portion of the Pennsylvania regiment on the line of the stockade forts on the route to Fort Pitt, as lieutenant commanding a company.

In the intervals of his military service, William Maclay found time to study law, and on April 28, 1760, was admitted to the bar of York County; although it is likely that he never engaged actively in the duties of the profession. After the close of the French wars, he turned his attention to surveying, and this opens a new chapter in his career. The officers of the Pennsylvania regiment commanded by Hon. John Penn, who had served under Colonel Bouquet, had, in 1764, made a written agreement to apply for a tract of land in central Pennsylvania. Accordingly on April 30, 1765, they forwarded their application to the Proprietors. They proposed to embody themselves in a compact settlement at some distance from the inhabited part of the province, "where by their industry, they might procure a comfortable subsistence for themselves, and by their arms, union and increase, become a powerful barrier to the Province." They further represented that the land thus far purchased from the Indians did not afford any situation convenient for their purpose; but the confluence of the two branches of the Susquehanna at Shamokin (Sunbury) did. They therefore prayed the Proprietors to make a purchase, and to grant them 40,000 acres of arable land on the West Branch of the Susquehanna. On November 5, 1768, a treaty was made with the Indians at Fort Stanwix by Thomas and Richard Penn, by which a tract of 24,000 acres was acquired along the West Branch, to be divided among the petitioners in distinct surveys. In March, 1769, Samuel Maclay, for his brother William, surveyed 8,000 acres in what is now Union County; 6,096 acres on Chillisquaque Creek and 9,904 acres on Bald Eagle Creek. In the meantime, William Maclay had been appointed deputy surveyor of the Province. It was in this capacity that he surveyed the site of Mifflintown, on the Juniata River, April 2, 1766. He soon became a prominent land holder in this neighborhood, being assessed in 1767 for three hundred acres. In 1769, he married Mary, daughter of John Harris, Jr., the founder of Harrisburg. Maclay brought his wife to Mifflintown, where they resided for several years. He was appointed Justice of the Peace, May 21, 1770, but in the following year, his name disappears from the list of residents. In the interval between 1763 and 1770, he also paid a visit to England, where he had an interview with Thomas Penn, one of the Proprietaries, relative to the survey of lands on the frontiers of the Province. From

this time until the end of the proprietary government, Maclay served as representative of the Penn family in all matters pertaining to surveys on the frontier.

The next chapter in the career of William Maclay associates his name with the formation of Northumberland County and the new settlement at Sunbury. As many of the older towns of England had their beginning in Roman forts, so Sunbury dates its origin from the erection of Fort Augusta, on the east bank of the Susquehanna, just below the junction of the North and West branches of that river. This fort, built in 1756, stood at the upper end of the present town of Sunbury, its artillery covering the country in every direction, and protecting the lower settlements from the enemy. It was staunchly built and equipped with twelve cannon and two swivels, while seven blunderbusses were included in its armament. The fort occupied a position of great strategic importance, completely blocking the advance of the French into the Susquehanna region. William Maclay seems to have been commander of Fort Augusta in 1770, being succeeded before the close of that year by Colonel Hunter.

The county of Northumberland was organized March 12, 1772, out of Lancaster, Cumberland, Berks, Northampton and Bedford Counties. It was directed by the colonial authorities that the courts should be held at Fort Augusta until a court house and other public buildings could be erected. A committee consisting of William Maclay, Samuel Hunter, John Loudon, Joseph Wallis, and Robert Moody, were appointed to purchase a site on which to erect the court house and jail. People crowded into this region so rapidly that it was soon necessary to form a regular town. On June 16, 1772, the Governor issued an order to Surveyor-General John Lukens and William Maclay, deputy surveyor, to lay out a town for Northumberland County at Fort Augusta, to be called Sunbury. The streets were arranged at right angles on the plan of Philadelphia, and the choicest lots were reserved for the Proprietaries. William Maclay erected in 1773 a pretentious mansion at the northwest corner of Arch and Front Streets, Sunbury. The back part of the lot was stockaded during the Revolution. Fithian's Journal, 1775, says of Sunbury that all the houses, one hundred in number, are of logs, but William Maclay's, which is of stone, and large and elegant. This property was owned until recently by Hon. S. P. Wolverton, member of Congress. After making his residence at Sunbury, Maclay became an extensive landowner, being assessed in 1785 as follows: Augusta township, 1,050 acres, Buffalo township, 120 acres, and Potter township, 1,500 acres.

On the organization of the county of Northumberland in 1772, William Maclay was honored with several important public offices. On March 24, 1772, he was appointed justice of the peace, and the same year, he received commissions as Prothonotary, Clerk of the Orphans' Court and Recorder of Deeds. On September 15, 1783, he was appointed to examine the navigation of the Susquehanna River; to determine whether any part of Lake Erie bordered on Pennsylvania; also to view the Delaware River, and report on the best mode of removing every obstruction. He was selected, February 23, 1784, as a commissioner to hold a treaty with the Indians claiming the unpurchased territory within the limits of the State; also in 1785, to distribute goods to the Six Nations of Indians at Tioga. The state authorities constantly recognized William Maclay's abilities in dealing with the Indians. This

is shown by his appointment on February 23, 1784, with John Atlee and Francis Johnson, as commissioners to treat with the Indians for the unpurchased lands within the borders of the State. The commissioners met the chiefs of the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix, New York, October 24, 1784, and secured for the State by treaty the title to land now forming fourteen entire counties and portions of others. They brought for the Indians a valuable cargo as compensation. The Indians took a day to deliberate, and replied through a chief of the Senecas, that it was not their wish to part with so much of their hunting grounds, and they pointed out a line which they hoped would be satisfactory. The commissioners rejected this proposition, and offered $4,000 worth of goods and the privilege of hunting to the Indians. An additional $1,000 was finally promised and the deeds were signed. The commissioners then proceeded to Sunbury and Beaver to confer with the Wyandots and Delawares, who had a claim on the lands. They also confirmed the sale. Maclay's correspondence with the State authorities during these years reveals a great interest in Indian affairs ; he also regularly carried on his vocation as surveyor while residing at Sunbury. On July 23, 1776, he wrote to Richard Peters, Secretary of the War Office, that he had searched with some success for flints, and sent some specimens with Mr. Bell, which were pronounced by gunsmiths superior to imported flints. He says : "The vein or quarry appears inexhaustible, and is situated along the banks of Penn's Creek, ten miles distant from Sunbury." This was near the town of New Berlin, in Union County. Mr. Maclay's find was never utilized by Congress or the War Office. There was a factory for boring gun barrels in that locality, but as to the manufacture or preparation of flints, history is silent.

In the Revolution, Maclay actively supported the American cause, and he marched with the militia to the seat of war. He took part in the battles of Trenton and Princeton, and served as assistant commissary on his return to Sunbury. In this capacity, he forwarded military supplies to the forts in the Wyoming Valley, during the warfare in that region.

The next chapter in the life of William Maclay is connected with the struggle between the authorities of Pennsylvania and Connecticut for possession of the Wyoming Valley. This conflict grew out of the overlapping territorial grants made to William Penn and the province of Connecticut. The Connecticut charter conveyed to that colony a strip of territory as wide as the colony and extending through from Narragansett Bay to the Pacific Ocean, bounded on the south by the forty-first parallel. The charter to William Penn fixed the northern boundary of his province at the forty-second parallel. As Connecticut became thickly settled, many of her people sought new homes farther west. It was then that they began to lay claim to a strip of northern Pennsylvania fully a degree in width. As early as 1750, parties of explorers had crossed the Blue Ridge and gazed for the first time into the beautiful valley of Wyoming. What they saw has been described in the following language :

"They never forgot that scene. Nor will our race ever look upon such a scene again. The valley was about twenty-one miles long and three miles wide. The broad, rippling Susquehanna wound through it, now burying itself in groves of sycamores and again flashing into the sunlight in wide expanses. There were woodland and meadow, level

plains and lowland plains, and the remains of ancient fortifications of a vanished race. Mountain ranges bounded every side. The quail whistled in the meadows, the grouse drummed in the woods, and the wild ducks nested along the river. The deer and elk wandered at will from the plains to the mountains. The streams that poured down ravines to join the river were full of trout, and in the spring large schools of shad came up the Susquehanna. Wild grapes and plums grew in the woods, and here and there on the plains the Indians had cultivated tracts of corn. It was an ideal spot, the natural home of the hunter and the poet, a combination of peace, duty, abundance, and wild life such as is seldom found."

As early as 1753, the Susquehanna Company was formed in Connecticut, the object being to colonize Wyoming. In 1762, a colony of two hundred Connecticut farmers entered the Valley and began a regular settlement. A struggle was now at hand between the Penns and Connecticut, known as the Pennamite War. The Proprietaries disputed the right of the Connecticut people to settle in the Wyoming region, while the Susquehanna Company sent Colonel Zebulon Butler to Wyoming, instructing him to hold it against the Penns. In 1775, Connecticut established a regular government in the disputed area, by the organization of Westmoreland County. The controversy lasted until December 30, 1782, when a Federal court decided that all the lands within the chartered boundaries of Pennsylvania, which Connecticut had claimed, belonged to the former State. Connecticut accepted the verdict, and the Pennamite War was at an end. The woes of this region were rendered more bitter by the Wyoming Massacre in the Revolution, when the Tories and Indians completed a desolation which thrilled the heart of two continents.

The miseries of this period are vividly described in the letters of William Maclay, who took an active part in the operations, both against the Connecticut invaders and the Tories. On April 2, 1773, he wrote the colonial authorities, urging the completion of the jail at Sunbury as a place for confining the outlaws from Wyoming. The Assembly at once appropriated eight hundred pounds to the county of Northumberland for building a court house and prison. It was completed in 1776, a stone and brick structure, one part being used for a court house and the other for a prison. On the open square in front of it, stood the whipping post, a barbarous instrument in the penal system of the eighteenth century. In this letter, Maclay portrayed the conditions in Wyoming in most vivid language. He said: "If Hell is justly considered as the rendezvous of rascals, we cannot entertain a doubt of Wyoming being the place. Burned hands, cut ears, etc., are considered as the certain certificates of superior merit; we have certain accounts of their having had several meetings lately to choose a sovereign and settle the State, for it seems they have not now any dependence on the government of Connecticut. The time of the descent on the West Branch, Fort Augusta, etc., is now fixed for May next. I have no doubt but the desperate tempers of these people will hurry them into some tragical affair which will at last arouse our government, when it may be too late to repair the mischief done by them." The correspondence of William Maclay indicates that during these years of bloodshed and confusion in the Wyoming Valley, he was the close adviser of the State government. On September 22, 1775, he notified the authorities at Philadelphia that a Connecticut magistrate was about to pilot three

hundred colonists down the West Branch, the purpose being to encroach upon the Pennsylvania settlements. Maclay, with his family, as well as many other Northumberland people, took refuge at Paxtang, further down the Susquehanna River. On July 12, 1778, he wrote from Paxtang to the State Executive Council, describing the condition of affairs. At this time, the desolation of Wyoming was complete, and the people were abandoning Northumberland County to the Tories and Indians. He said: "I left Sunbury and almost all my property on Wednesday last. I will not trouble you with a recital of the inconveniences I suffered, while I brought my family by water to this place. I never in my life saw such scenes of distress. The river and the roads leading down to it were covered with men, women and children, flying for their lives, many without any property at all, and none who had not left the greatest part behind. In short, Northumberland County is broken up, Colonel Hunter only remained, using his utmost endeavors to rally some of the inhabitants, and to make a stand, however short, against the enemy." Maclay declared that Wyoming was totally abandoned, scarcely a single family remaining between that place and Sunbury. He urged the Council to send reinforcements at once to protect the Susquehanna country from the ravages of the Indians. On April 27, 1779, he submitted a proposition to the Council for employing dogs to hunt the savages. He presented the following arguments to sustain this view: "I have sustained some ridicule for a scheme which I have long recommended, namely, that of hunting the scalping parties of Indians with horsemen and dogs. The imminent services which dogs have rendered to our people in some late instances, seems to open people's eyes to a method of this kind. We know that dogs will follow them, that they will discover them, and even seize them, when hunted on by their masters. History informs us that it was in this manner that the Indians were extirpated out of the whole country in South America. It may be objected that we have not proper dogs. It is true that every new thing must be learned; but we have, even now, dogs that will follow them, and the arrantest cur will both follow and fight in company. I cannot help being of opinion that a single troop of light horse, attended by dogs (and who might occasionally carry a footman behind them, that the pursuit might not be interrupted by morasses or mountains), under honest and active officers, would destroy more Indians than five thousand men stationed in forts along the frontiers. I am not altogether singular in this opinion. Could not such a thing be tried? On July 26, 1779, Maclay wrote from Paxtang to President Reed that he had given his large house at Sunbury to the authorities as a place for depositing the military stores. He asked for a small guard of militia in order to render this magazine secure. Again, on July 30, 1779, he wrote the Council imploring help. He said: "I need not ask you what is to be done, Help! Help! or the towns of Sunbury and Northumberland must fall; our whole frontier laid open, and the communication with General Sullivan's army cut off." From Maclay's letter to the Council on August 5, 1779, we infer that he had returned from Paxtang to Sunbury. In this communication, he declares that the martial spirit was very active on the frontiers of Pennsylvania. The threatened attack upon Northumberland had the desired effect of arousing the inhabitants of Lancaster, Cumberland and York Counties. Volunteers poured into Sunbury to the number of five hundred. The country, however, was ravaged on every side, the enemy being amaz-

ingly fond of plunder, and what they could not carry away was destroyed by fire. In his letter to President Reed on April 2, 1780, he asked for troops to dislodge the Indians along Fishing and Muncy Creeks. He expressed regret that all their troops were not Pennsylvanians. Speaking of the mixture of nationalties in that region, he said : "This is a strange, divided quarter,—Whig, Tory, Yankee, Pennsylvania Dutch, Irish, and English, are strangely blended. I must confess, I begin to be national too, and most sincerely believe every public interest of America will be safer in the hands of Americans, than with any others."

I have reviewed William Maclay's correspondence at considerable length, as it throws much light on a very important period of Pennsylvania history. His letters reveal the heroism and sufferings of the frontier settlers during the years of savage warfare. These brave pioneers successfully resisted the Tories and Indians, and thus saved eastern Pennsylvania from a desolation like that which swept over the Wyoming Valley.

With the return of peace in central Pennsylvania, William Maclay began his legislative career, which we will now consider. From 1781 to 1785, he represented Northumberland County in the Pennsylvania Assembly, while in 1786, he was a member of the Supreme Executive Council of the State. In the meantime, January 22, 1785, he was commissioned justice of the peace in Northumberland County. William Maclay's brothers were also active in public life, John being a member of the conference held in Carpenter's Hall, which resolved that "they, in behalf of the people of Pennsylvania, were willing to concur in a vote of Congress declaring the United Colonies free and independent States." John Maclay served three terms in the Pennsylvania Legislature, 1790, 1792, and 1794. Samuel Maclay, also a brother of William Maclay, was a member of the Pennsylvania Senate from 1797 to 1802, and was chosen Speaker of that body. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1802, and retired with the expiration of his term in 1809.

The election of William Maclay to the United States Senate brought to that body a most interesting personage. He was six feet and three inches in height, light complexion, while his brown hair was tied behind or "clubbed." A writer states that "he used to watch Mr. Maclay wearing a suit of white flannel, with lace ruffles, walking up and down the river bank at Harrisburg, and he thought he had never seen such a dignified, majestic old gentleman." He added : "I was always half afraid of him—he seemed to awe me into insignificance." From the beginning of his Senatorial term, William Maclay became a strong opponent of Federal measures, while his colleague, Robert Morris, zealously defended the administration. According to some historians, the attitude of Maclay had an important bearing on the organization of the Democratic party. Dr. Egle expresses the following views on this subject : "His election to this body raised him upon a higher plane of political activity ; but contact with the Federal chiefs of the Senate only strengthened his political convictions, which, formed by long intercouse with the people of middle Pennsylvania, were intensely Democratic. He began to differ with the opinions of President Washington very early in the session ; he did not approve of the state and ceremony attendant upon the intercourse of the President with Congress ; he flatly objected to the presence of the President in the Senate while business was being transacted, and in the Senate boldly

spoke against his policy in the immediate presence of President Washington. The New England historians, Hildreth and Goodrich, repute Thomas Jefferson as the 'efficient promoter at the beginning, and father and founder of the Democratic party.' Contemporary records, however, show beyond the shadow of a doubt that this responsibility or honor, in whatever light it may be regarded, cannot be shifted from the shoulders or taken from the laurels of Pennsylvania statesmanship. Before Jefferson's return from Europe, William Maclay assumed an independent position, and in his short career of two years in the Senate, propounded ideas and gathered about him elements to form the opposition which developed with the meeting of Congress at Philadelphia on October 24, 1791, in a division of the people into two great parties, the Federalists and Democrats."

Maclay's opinions of men and affairs in the Senate are recorded in his journal beginning April 24, 1789, and ending on March 3, 1791. Many of his observations are highly colored, being written in the evening immediately after the exciting debates in the Senate. The journal has been published in two forms, as follows: (1) "Sketches of Debate in the First Senate of the United States, in 1789-90-91. By William Maclay. Edited by George W. Harris, Harrisburg, 1880"; (2) Journal of William Maclay, United States Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791. Edited by Edgar S. Maclay, A. M., New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1890." We shall now proceed to review William Maclay's career as a Senator from the pages of the Journal itself. His residence in New York city as put down in the Register for 1789, was at Mr. Vandolsom's, near the Bear Market. From his correspondence we learn that he had reached the seat of government several weeks before the organization of Congress was effected.

The first part of Maclay's journal is devoted to his comments on titles and ceremonies. His fault-finding disposition at this time was, no doubt, aggravated by an attack of rheumatism from which he was suffering. "Ceremonies," he exclaimed, "endless ceremonies, the whole business of the day!" Complaining of the monarchical tendencies, he said: "I entertain no doubt but that many people are aiming with all their force to establish a splendid Court with all the pomp of majesty. Alas! poor Washington, if you are taken in this snare! How will the gold become dim! Republicans are borne down by fashion and a fear of being charged with a want of respect to General Washington. If there is treason in the wish I retract it, but would to God this same General Washington were in heaven! We would not then have him brought forward as the constant cover to every unconstitutional and irrepublican act." Maclay criticized the formalities of inauguration day, and implored the goddess of etiquette while he described the occasion. When the question of a proper title for the President was before the Senate, he spoke with feeling on the subject, and opposed all appellations except the simple form given in the Constitution, President of the United States. He took an active part in the debates on the first tariff when that measure reached the Senate. In order to fully understand the following extracts from his Journal, it should be remembered that he advocated protective duties:

"May 10.—A Philadelphia merchant was in with Mr. Wynkoop. He alleged that Mr. Fitzsimmons delayed the impost bill while his own Indiamen should arrive, for it seems he has more than one.

"May 21.—An idea has gone abroad that the mercantile interest

has been exerted to delay this bill. The merchants have undoubtedly regulated the prices of their goods agreeable to the proposed duties, so that the consumers of dutied articles really pay the whole of the impost.

"May 25.—I fear that our own impost will be rendered in a great measure unproductive. This business is the work of the New England men. They want the article of molasses quite struck out, or at least greatly reduced; therefore they will strike at everything, or, to place it in a different point of view, almost every part will be proscribed either by one or other of those who choose to be opponents, for every conspirator must be indulged in the sacrifice of his particular enemy.

"May 26.—The impost was taken up. All ran smoothly until we came to the molasses. Till quarter after three did the New England men beat this ground, even to the baiting of the hook that caught the fish that went to buy the molasses. The motion was to reduce it to four cents from five. The vote for four cents carried. All the arguments of the other House were repeated over and over.

"May 28.—Senate met. Cables, cordage, etc., came up. They stood at seventy-five cents. Mr. Langdon (New Hampshire) spoke warmly against this. Mr. Morris, of Pennsylvania, moved a reduction to fifty cents. I urged so much that he said sixty. This was seconded. I had to show some pointed reason why I urged sixty. Indeed, it was much against my will that any reduction took place. I was up four times in all. We carried it, however, at sixty.

We passed on with little interruption until we got to twine. Mr. Lee (Virginia) kept us an hour and a quarter on this business, because the Virginians had hitherto imported their nets from Britain. Once for all, I may remark of him (Mr. Lee) that he has given opposition to every article, especially the protecting duties. He declares openly against the principle of them. Mr. Grayson (Virginia, a steady and consistent opponent of the Constitution) declares against all impost as the most unjust and oppressive mode of taxation.

Now came the postponed article of loaf sugar. Lee labored with spite and acrimony in this business. He said the loaf sugar of America was bad. It was lime and other vile compositions. He had broken a spoon in trying to dissolve and separate it, 'and so I (Lee) must go on breaking my spoon and three millions of people must be taxed to support half a dozen people in Philadelphia.' He pronounced this sentence, especially the part about the spoon, with so tremulous an accent and so forlorn an aspect as would have excited even Stoics to laughter. There was a laugh, but no retort on him. I supported the motion by showing that the sugar-baking business was of importance, as it gave employment to many other artificers,—the mason, bricklayer, carpenter, and all the artificers employed in building, for they had to build largely. I thought this as plain a subject as could come before the House, and yet we divided, and the Vice President gave us the casting vote.

"May 29.—Now came salt. Up rose Mr. Lee, of the Ancient Dominion. He gave us an account of the great revenue derived from salt in France, England, and all the world. He concluded a lengthy harangue with a motion for twelve cents, which in his opinion was vastly too low. What shall I think of Lee, this Ishmael of the House? He seemed disposed to destroy the whole effect of the impost bill on every other article. The tax on salt he knows must be odious, and this he is for doubling at the first word. He is a great advocate for an excise. If I

really wished to destroy the new Constitution, to injure it to the utmost of my power, I would follow exactly the line of conduct he has pursued. Far be it, however, from me to say this of him. People employ the same means for very different ends, and such is the vanity of human opinion that the same object is often aimed at by means directly opposite.

"June 2.—After some preliminary business, proceeded on the impost bill without much opposition till we came to an enumeration of fifteen or sixteen articles which all stood at seven and a half per cent. The most of these articles stood in the old protecting duties of Pennsylvania at twelve and a half per cent. I feared much the spirit of reduction would get into the opposers of the impost, and that they would be for lowering everything. From this sole motive I would have an augmentation, by way of securing the duty where it was. However, I had better ground. I set out with naming over the greater part of the articles on which the protecting duties of Pennsylvania were over twelve and a half per cent., and thirteen per cent. in New York. I reasoned from the effect of these duties in promoting the manufacture. But by the present duties the manufactures would stand on worse ground by five per cent. than they had done under the State laws; that although the United States were not absolutely obliged to make good the engagements of the States to individuals, yet, as individuals had embarked their property in these manufactures, depending on the State laws, I thought it wrong to violate these laws without absolute necessity. I was, as usual, opposed by the Southern people.

"June 11.—Butler (South Carolina) flamed away and threatened a dissolution of the Union, with regard to his State, as sure as God was in the firmament! He scattered his remarks over the whole impost bill, calling it partial, oppressive, etc., and solely calculated to oppress South Carolina; and yet ever and anon declaring how clear of local views, how candid and dispassionate he was. He degenerated into mere declamation. His state would live or die glorious, etc. We, however, got through by three o'clock."

Thus on June 11 the work on the impost bill was finished. After the adoption of a few amendments, the measure was passed, and on July 4 it was signed by the President.

Among the most interesting pages of Maclay's Journal are those dealing with the funding and assumption of the debts, and the location of the seat of government. These measures were carried through by means of a compromise, which provided that if the Southern members in Congress would vote for assumption, the national government should be removed from New York to Philadelphia for ten years, and after that to a city to be built on the Potomac. Maclay relates in a graphic manner the struggle over these measures in the Senate. He was interested in the question of the seat of government several weeks before Congress assembled. On March 13, 1789, he wrote to Judge Yeates, of Lancaster: "Sir, I consider it almost certain that the permanent residence of Congress will be agitated at the ensuing session, desirous as I am to bring forward information from every part of Pennsylvania to throw light on this important subject. You may guess my mortification at receiving no answer to my letters on this head from Lancaster. Let it suffice to say that you have been wrong, and be no longer so, but send me the information which I requested. But you should not stop here. Mr. Hamilton should be spoken to and he should furnish some member of

Congress with proposals under his hand relating to the terms on which he would give grounds for public buildings, and let lots for private persons. With all the pains you may take, it is possible you may not succeed, but without pains you need not expect it." Four days later, the corporation and citizens of Lancaster addressed a letter to Congress urging the claims of that city as the seat of government. They described the city, its advantages, industries, prices of provisions, etc., and emphasized its central position. On March 23, 1789, Judge Yeates wrote at considerable length to Senator Maclay, urging the claims of his city. He said: "It strikes me that the cardinal point first to be discussed will be whether a seaport or an inland, central situation is most eligible under the general interests of the Union at large. If the first should be preferred, we have then no pretensions to the honor; if the latter, we submit our claims with due deference to the wisdom of Congress. We offer them an inland town in a considerable degree of improvement, a well-cultivated and fertile country, a healthy situation and inhabitants industrious." On August 25, 1789, Maclay presented to the Senate the plan and description of Lancaster. He also nominated Wright's Ferry, Yorktown, Carlisle, Harrisburg, Reading and Germantown as eligible sites for the Federal capital. Several members, in order to try Maclay, insisted on Harrisburg. He assured them that of two hundred acres which he had near that town, the government should have one hundred if the capital went there. On the other hand, he declared that his colleague, Morris, seemed to be bent on one object, "to get the Federal residence to Trenton." Countercharges were then made against the Pennsylvania Senators: that Morris favored the Falls of Trenton because he owned large tracts of land in that vicinity; and on the other hand that Maclay owned land at Harrisburg, and, therefore, wanted the capital on the Susquehanna. It soon became apparent that the location of the Capital would have to be compromised with the more important question of funding and assuming the State debts. This was finally done, and on July 16, a bill was passed fixing the temporary residence of the government for ten years at Philadelphia, and then a permanent residence on the Potomac. The South had won the Capital by agreeing to vote for assumption. Maclay declared that the whole affair was a corrupt bargain. He said: "The President of the United States has, in my opinion, had a great influence in this business. The game was played by him and his adherents of Virginia and Maryland between New York and Philadelphia, to give one of those places the temporary residence, but the permanent residence on the Potomac. I found a demonstration that this was the case, and that New York would have accepted the temporary residence if we did not, but I did not then see so clearly that the abominations of the funding system and the assumption were so intimately connected with it. Alas! that the affection, nay, almost adoration of the people, should meet so unworthy a return. Here are their best interests sacrificed to the vain whim of fixing Congress and a great commercial town so opposite to the genius of the Southern planter, on the Potomac, and the President has become, in the hands of Hamilton, the dish-clout of every dirty speculation, as his name goes to wipe away blame and silence all murmuring." On July 20, Senator Maclay spoke at length against the plan of funding and assuming the debts. He contended that speculators had purchased the certificates below par, and, therefore, it was wrong for Congress to fund the debt at face value. He opposed funding on general

principles, regarding it wrong for the present generation to charge debts upon posterity. He believed that the western lands would provide an ample revenue for discharging the expenses of the war. He said : "Thus no one will sustain loss. Substantial justice will be done, and the public expectation will be satisfied. But to bind down the public by an irredeemable debt with such sources of payment in our power, is equally absurd as shackling the hands and feet with fetters rather than walking at liberty." He declared that the vote in the Senate on funding and assumption put wrinkles of disappointment in his face. After these measures had been adopted, Maclay was convinced that Hamilton directed everything. In scorn, he dated his letters "Hamiltonopolis," and referred to the Secretary of the Treasury as "his Holiness." He felt confident that Hamilton was turning the Constitution into an instrument of despotism, and wrote : "My mind revolts, in many instances, against the Constitution of the United States. Indeed, I am afraid it will turn out the vilest of all traps that ever was set to ensnare the freedom of an unsuspecting people."

Besides observations on affairs of state, Maclay's Journal is brightened here and there with sparkling wit ; or occasionally when the rheumatism torments him, he can see nothing but ultimate failure in republican institutions and universal wickedness among public men. On July 20, 1789, he was compelled by illness to ask a leave of absence for three weeks. When suffering with the tortures of pain, he grew pessimistic and wrote the following apostrophe to death : "Death, Death, thou art a solemn messenger, and will take us all in rotation ! But let me pause. What art thou ? I have been so ill that I would have swallowed thee in an anodyne. Yes, when our joys leave us, when pain possesses all our feelings, thou art the grand composer of all our miseries, the last potion in the cup of life ; and surely it need not be called a bitter one, for none ever complained after swallowing the draught. How little of the sweet and how deeply dashed with gall is the diet of life ! Passes there a day in which we taste not of it ?" His friends deluged him with cures for rheumatism, the following being the most characteristic :

"1. A teaspoonful of the flour of brimstone taken every morning before breakfast. General St. Clair and Mr. Milligan both relieved by it. Note.—They are both Scotchmen.

2. Assafœtida laid on hot coals and held to the nose.

3. Cider in which a hot iron has been quenched."

Maclay, according to the Journal, occasionally tried his hand at literary composition. He speaks of writing a drama under the character of an "Old Soldier and Irishman." Washington treated Maclay with uniform kindness, giving him the use of the President's box at the theatre, and frequently inviting him to dinner. After one of these occasions, he wrote the following description of John Adams : "Goddess of nature, forgive me if I centure thee for that thou madest him not a tailor, so full of small attentions is he, and so well qualified does he seem to adjust the etiquette of loops and buttons. But stay, perhaps I wrong thee. So miserably does he measure politics, and so unmercifully and unskillfully would he play the shears of government in cutting out royal robes and habiliments, that it may justly be doubted whether the measure of his understanding be adequate to the adjusting the proportions of the back, belly, and breeches of the human form agreeably to the rules of an experienced habit maker." His description

of Jefferson, as he appeared at the various State functions, is related in the Journal, as follows:

"Jefferson is a slender man; has rather the air of stiffness in his manner; his clothes seem too small for him; he sits in a lounging manner, on one hip commonly, and with one of his shoulders elevated much above the other; his face has a sunny aspect; his whole figure has a loose, shackling air. He had a rambling, vacant look, and nothing of that firm, collected deportment which I expected would dignify the presence of a secretary or minister. I looked for gravity, but a laxity of manner seemed shed about him. He spoke almost without ceasing. But even his discourse partook of his personal demeanor. It was loose and shambling, and yet he scattered information wherever he went, and some even brilliant sentiments sparkled from him. The information which he gave us concerning foreign ministers, etc., was all high-spiced. He had been long enough abroad to catch the tone of European folly. He gave us a sentiment which seemed rather to savor of quaintness: 'It is better to take the highest of the lowest than the lowest of the highest.' Translation: 'It is better to appoint a *charge'* with a handsome salary than a minister plenipotentiary with a small one.'"

Maclay realized as early as January, 1791, that he would not be returned to the Senate, in fact, he said: "I will receive no support from the Republican party, for there is not a man of them who is not aiming at a six-dollar prize, and my place is the best chance in the wheel." He compared his experience in Congress to a walk among briars and thorns, and being blessed with affluence, he wished to return to private life. On March 3, 1791, his senatorial term ended, and the Journal closes with this entry: "As I left the Hall, I gave it a look with that kind of satisfaction which a man feels on leaving a place where he has been ill at ease, being fully satisfied that many a culprit has served two years at the wheelbarrow without feeling half the pain and mortification that I experienced in my honorable station." Senator Maclay's place was not filled during the first session of the second Congress; but on February 28, 1792, Albert Gallatin was elected to fill the vacancy. Gallatin took his seat in October, 1793, but was declared ineligible for want of nine years' citizenship. The seat remained vacant until April 2, 1794, when James Ross was elected, and sworn in the same month.

On the expiration of his senatorial term, William Maclay immediately returned to Harrisburg, where he had an estate of two hundred acres. Most of the land owned by him is now included within the limits of that city. At one time the low ground, fronting the State Capitol, between Second and Third Streets, and from Pine Street to the ridge northeast of Harrisburg, was a dense swamp, whose edges were so thickly beset with tangled briers that, in the language of an old citizen, "the place was almost impenetrable to the dogs." This region was familiarly known as "Maclay's Swamp," from the owner of the land. As early as March 3, 1784, John Harris, father-in-law of William Maclay, proposed to lay out a town of two hundred lots on the high ground above his residence at Harris' Ferry, the lots to contain a quarter of an acre each. After the formation of Dauphin County, March 4, 1785, William Maclay proceeded to lay out the town of Harrisburg, as proposed by his father-in-law. He made a draft of the place, and drew up the conveyances from John Harris to the commissioners. It was incorporated as a borough, April 13, 1791. In 1791, Maclay erected a mansion in Harrisburg at the corner of Front and

South streets. He continued to reside here until the time of his death, when the property finally passed into the hands of the Harrisburg Academy. John Lyon, of Harrisburg, who married Jane, daughter of William Maclay, in settling his father-in-law's estate, furnished the deed of conveyance for the ground on which the Capitol building now stands.

William Maclay's public activities did not end with his retirement from the Senate, as the following record shows: member of assembly, 1795 and 1803; presidential elector, 1796; associate judge of Dauphin County, 1801 to 1803. He died on April 16, 1804, and was buried in the Paxtang church graveyard, three miles from Harrisburg. The following were his children by marriage with Mary Harris: John, born Feb. 5, 1770; Eliza, born Feb. 16, 1772; Eleanor, born Jan. 17, 1774, married William Wallace; Mary, born March 19, 1776, married Samuel Awl, of Paxtang; Esther, born Sept. 17, 1778, married Dr. Henry Hall; Sarah, born Jan. 5, 1781, married John Irwin; Jean, born March 19, 1783, married John Lyon; William, born 1784, and died in infancy; and William, born May 5, 1787.

With this brief sketch, I shall leave the subject, hoping that, in the near future, a more competent writer may be able to give us a comprehensive biography of William Maclay. The Scotch-Irish race to which he belonged, did heroic service on the Pennsylvania frontier, which must be considered in making up the history of the Commonwealth. In peace and war alike, they served the State and Nation with fidelity. We should cherish their memory, and faithfully preserve the record of their deeds. In performing this duty, we cannot be accused of adulation; but on the other hand, we shall be rendering a service to posterity in gathering from various sources the scattered materials which we hope to see woven into a complete history of the State.

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